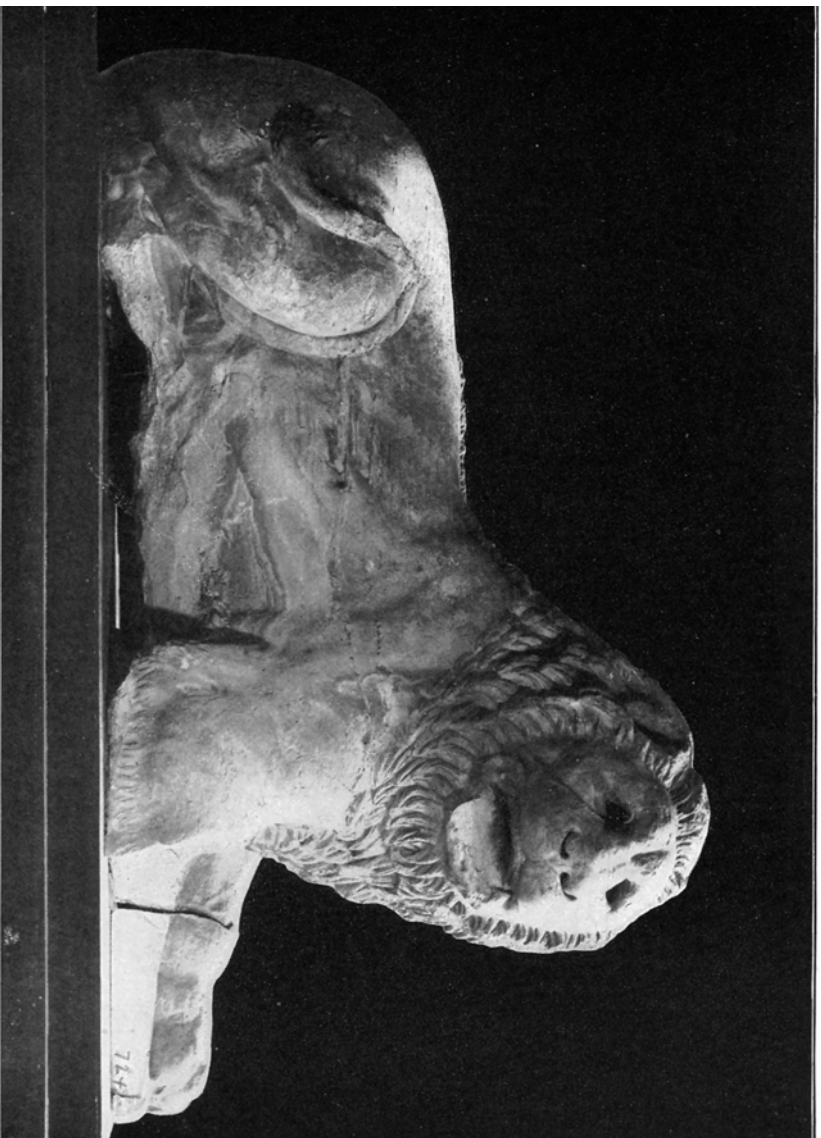


THE ANTIQUITY OF THE LION IN GREECE
ADOLF BERNHARD MEYER

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COLOSSAL MARBLE LION FROM A POLYANDREION OR MAUSOLEUM NEAR CNIDUS, SUPPOSED TO COMMEMORATE VICTORY BY
ATHENIAN ADMIRAL CONON OVER LAGED/EMONIANS, 394 B. C. (ABOUT B. C. 300.)

THE ANTIQUITY OF THE LION IN GREECE.

By A. B. MEYER.^a

The descriptive images of the lion by the earliest Greek author, Homer,^b are so realistic and true to nature (compare especially in the *Iliad*, xi, 544 sqq.), that they must be ascribed to direct observation,^c yet this does not prove the existence of that animal in Greece in historic time. Aside from other possibilities, it is uncertain whether the passages in question originated as late as the entire Homeric epic on the soil of Asia Minor (*Æolia*, *Ionian*), or whether they belong to earlier continental (*Thessalian*) collections of hymns. Herodotus, from about 484 to about 430 B. C., records, in volume vii, pages 124–126, of his history, that there are many lions between the Achelous River in *Acarnania* and the Nestus, which flows through *Abdera*, and this he mentions in connection with the description of Xerxes's expedition through Macedonia in 480 B. C., when lions killed some draft camels. This passage is often cited. Aristotle (384–322 B. C.), in *Hist. anim.*, viii, 28, gives the same range, but seems to have taken it only from Herodotus.^d

On this G. C. Lewis^e remarks:

The scientific character of Aristotle's researches in natural history gives great weight to his testimony. As he was a native of *Stagira* and had resided in Macedonia, he may be supposed to have had opportunities for verifying it; and we can not assume that he blindly followed the account of Herodotus, although at an interval of about a century he defines the range of the lion by the same two rivers.

^aTranslation of A. B. Meyer's "Bis wie weit in der historischen Zeit zurück ist der Löwe in Griechenland nachweisbar?" Reprint from *Der Zoologische Garten*, vol. XLIV, 1903, pp. 65–73.

^bThe most important passages among ancient authors who refer to the lion have been brought together in an interesting manner by H. O. Lenz, in "Zoologie der Alten Griechen und Römer," pp. 126–140, Gotha, 1886. Compare also O. Keller, *Tiere des klassischen Altertums*, Innsbruck, 1887, and L. Meyer, *Handbuch der griechischen Etymologie*, vol. iv., p. 498 sq., Leipzig, 1902.

^cThus already Pictet, *Les origines indo-européennes*, vol. i, p. 422, Paris, 1859, and O. Schade, *Altdeutsches Wörterbuch*, 2d ed., vol. ii, p. 548a, Halle, 1872–1882.

^dAccording to Pausanias (second century A. D.), vi, 5, 3, lions sometimes came down as far as Mount Olympus. The famous athlete (*pancratiast*) Polydamas, without shield or weapon, is said to have there slain a large and powerful lion. Comp. Lenz, *Zoologie der Griechen und Römer*, p. 34, note 78, 1856.

^eThe Lion in Greece; Notes and Queries, second series, vol. viii, p. 82, 1859.

Further, after calling attention to the fact that Aristotle corrected a nonsensical statement of Herodotus on the act of parturition of the lion, he adds:

* * * It seems very unlikely that Aristotle should have been able to correct the historian's account of the parturition of the lioness but not have thought it worth his while to verify the more obvious and patent fact of the occurrence of the lion in northern Greece.^a

And on page 59 he says:

It is very improbable that * * * he should in two places (i. e., also vi, 31) have repeated so important a statement as that of the presence of the lion in the whole of northern Greece, from Abdera in Thrace to the confines of Æolia, without verification and upon the mere credit of Herodotus, whom he elsewhere designates as a fabulist and whose errors in natural history he points out and rectifies in several places.

All this, though not cogent, is so obvious that it is easily understood when the philologist and the historian do not question Herodotus's "account, so definitely presented and twice repeated by Aristotle, a native of that region."^b Nay, J. Beloch^c even adds: "That it [the lion] once spread over the whole peninsula (i. e., also over middle Greece and the Peloponnesus) is shown by the myths of the Nemean and Cithæronian lions."^d On the part of philology there is thus apparently no ground to doubt the ancient tradition that even in historic time, about 500 B. C., there were lions in a part of Europe situated near Asia.

Turning from the ancient tradition to the domain of linguistic facts, we find among the Greeks a high antiquity of the lion's name,^e unpar-

^a Loc. cit., vol. ix, p. 56, 1860.

^b O. Schrader, *Reallexikon der indo-germanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. i, p. 508 1901.

^c *Griechische Geschichte*, vol. i, p. 37, note 1, 1893.

^d The same was already maintained by Lewis, loc. cit., 1860, and Dawkins and Sanford have adopted it, as we shall see below, in 1869.

^e Compare, in the first place, W. Schulze, *Quæstiones epicæ*, p. 70 et seq., *Gueterslohæ*, 1892; so already Th. Benfey, *Griechisches Wurzellexikon*, ii, 1, Berlin, 1842; F. A. Pott, *Etymologische Forschungen auf dem Gebiete der Indo-Germanischen Sprachen*, 2d ed., ii, p. 1261, Lemgo, 1867; F. Kauffmann, in Paul und Braune's *Beiträgen*, vol. xii, p. 210, 1887. For the Celtic forms see W. Stokes, *Urkeltscher Sprachschatz*, edited by A. Bezzenger (= A. Fick, *Vergleichendes Wörterbuch der Indogermanischen Sprachen*, 4th ed., vol. ii), p. 242, Göttingen, 1894; for the Slavo-Lettonian, J. Kartowicz (V. Jagie) in the *Archiv für Slavische Philologie*, vol. ii, p. 364 1877, and A. Brückner, *Die Slavischen Fremdwörter im Litauischen*, pp. 103 and 105, Weimar, 1877; for the old high German, besides O. Schade, *Altddeutsches Wörterbuch*, 2d ed., vol. ii, p. 547 sq., Halle, 1872-1882; also O. Bremer in Paul und Braune's *Beiträgen*, vol. xiii, p. 384-387, 1888, against F. Kauffmann, *ibid.*, vol. xii, p. 207-210, 1887, and H. Palander, *Die althochdeutschen Tiernamen*, vol. i, p. 46 sq., Darmstadt, 1899. Schulze (loc. cit.) considers the Greek name as the final source of all the other European designations, as a genuine Greek word, while L. Meyer (*Handbuch der griechischen Etymologie*, vol. iv, p. 499,

alleled in European Indo-Germanic languages, and this antiquity of the name makes it probable that it originally denoted an indigenous animal which could not have been other than the lion. But the existence of that animal in historic time is not thus proved, and the fact that philological studies leave us uncertain as to whether the name originally designated an indigenous animal leads us now to turn to zoology^a for a possible solution of the problem.

Likewise, if we search among the place names for traces of the existence of the lion we gain nothing. True, the word λέων (leon) occurs as the name of a cape near Eretria and Lebena^b in Crete, but these names certainly do not refer to the animal as native to the region, but merely indicate that the rock suggests a lion in shape.^c What, then, is the attitude of zoologists and paleontologists toward this question?

C. I. Sundevall^d expresses himself as follows: "From all this it becomes very probable that in 330 B. C. lions were still encountered in Macedonia, though very rare." It is as little doubted by A. Newton,^e Dupont, Nehring, von Zittel (see below), and others. Dawkins^f also refers, in agreement with Lewis,^g to Xenophon^h (from about 428 until after 355 B. C.) in regard to the occurrence of the lion in historic time in South Thracia, and adds: "It may have extended far over the Balkan Range into the valley of the Danube within the historic period of Greece."ⁱ Flower and Lydekker^j follow Dawkins and Sanford without reserve.

1902) thinks it possibly a word borrowed from a non-Greek linguistic sphere. The primitive relationship between the European Indo-Germanic lion names is of late upheld particularly by O. Schrader (*Sprachvergleichung und Urgeschichte*, p. 362 sq., Jena, 1890, comp. *Reallexikon der indogermanischen Altertumskunde*, vol. 1, p. 508 sq., Strassburg, 1901). I am indebted for the linguistic references to Dr. Oswald Richter, assistant in the Royal Ethnographical Museum at Dresden.

^a As did already Förstemann, *Zeitschrift für vergleichende Sprachforschung*, 1852, vol. 1, p. 495.

^b Lebena itself, which was a Phœnician colony, is named after the cape. Compare Hebrew *labi*, "lion;" comp. J. J. Egli, *Nom. geogr.*, 2d ed., p. 531, Leipzig, 1898, and H. Lewy, *Die semitischen Fremdwörter im Griechischen*, p. 7, Berlin, 1895.

^c Philostratus expressly mentions λέων as well as δράκων among the plays of nature: Nature causes mountains and mountain peaks to resemble animals as . . . the Cretan lion . . ." Comp. A. Fick in *Bezenberger's Beiträgen*, vol. xxi, p. 265, 1896.

^d *Die Tierarten des Aristoteles*, p. 47 sq., Stockholm, 1863.

^e *On the Zoology of Ancient Europe*, p. 7, London, 1862.

^f *British Pleistocene Mammalia*, pt. A, p. xxxiv, 1878.

^g *Loc. cit.*, vol. viii, p. 82, 1859.

^h *Cynegaticus* xi, 1.

ⁱ See also Dawkins and Sanford, *British Pleistocene Mammalia*, pt. iii, p. 166, 1869.

^j *Introduction to the Study of Mammals*, p. 504, 1891.

If bones of the *recent* lion have not yet been found in Greece, it should be remembered that the limited researches made in that country render negative evidence of little account. On the other hand, fossil lion bones are found. Thus only recently, as Dr. T. Krüper at Athens informed me, Doctor Skuphos found such a skull. The fossil cave lion was spread all over Europe during the Diluvial period. "In Diluvial bone caves of Europe," says von Zittel,^a "the cave lion, which does not differ from the lion now found in Africa and western Asia, occurs in solitary examples. In historic time it still inhabited southern Europe." Nehring has recently proved the existence of the Diluvial lion (*Felis spelæa* Goldf.) in the province of Brandenburg,^b and previously also in Thuringia, Westphalia, Brunswick, Hanover, and the province of Saxony.^c He remarks on that occasion: "As regards the question of the contemporaneousness of man with *Felis spelæa*, I can not help affirming it on the basis of my excavations in the gypsum quarry of Thiede (Brunswick)." We may expect an elaborate treatise by Professor Nehring on the Diluvial lion. He thinks, as he informed me, that about 20,000 years ago, during the steppe period, the cave lion roamed in Germany as far north as Brunswick. Dupont considers such fixing of dates impossible, and thinks that for the present we must be content with establishing the succession of forms (loc. cit.). He has variously proven the existence of *Felis spelæa* in Belgium.^d Its occurrence in England has been fully discussed by Dawkins and Sanford,^e who say that it completely disappeared at the end of the Post-Glacial or Quaternary period, and that no finds of prehistoric time have been made. The same investigators discuss^f its occurrence also in France, Belgium, Germany, the Carpathes, Italy, and Sicily. In the latter territory it is supposed (according to Falconer) to have existed contemporaneously with man. Thus, according to paleontological indications, the lion was once spread over almost entire Europe.

This fossil lion of Europe is, in the opinion of most investigators, identical with the lion of the present. Such identity was already asserted by D'Orbigny^g in 1858-1861, and, later, Dawkins and Sanford, in their already quoted work,^h in which they treated of the *Felis spelæa* with the utmost completeness and care, arrived at the conclusion "that there is not one character by which the animal can be distinguished from the living lion. It must therefore be admitted that

^a Handbuch der Paläontologie, vol. iv, p. 676, 1892.

^b Sitzungsberichte der Gesellschaft Naturforschender Freunde, Berlin, 1899, p. 71 sqq.

^c Zeitschrift für Ethnologie, Verhandlungen, vol. xxv, p. 407, 1893.

^d L'homme pendant les âges de la pierre, 2d ed., 1873, pp. 80, 89, 114, 118, etc.

^e Loc. cit., pp. 151-160.

^f Loc. cit., p. 160-161.

^g Diction d'hist. nat. (1858-1861), vol. iii, p. 429.

^h The British Pleistocene Mammalia, pt. iii, p. 150, 1869.

Felis spelæa is specifically identical with the lion now living on the face of the earth." For practical reasons they recommend the use of the designation *Felis leo* var. *spelæa* to denote that variety which during the Post-Glacial period inhabited the caves of north and west Europe. In 1890 Nehring^a declares, following the opinion of most modern investigators, that the cave lion, *Felis spelæa*, is "nothing else than a northern variety of the lion [evidently provided with a warm, shaggy skin] analogous to the northern variety of the tiger which occurs at present in south Siberia." Dupont^b likewise observes: "The lion, the reindeer, and the stag of the Quaternary epoch, in the remains which have been preserved to us, as much resemble those which live at present as the ibis which was embalmed thousands of years ago resembles the ibis which embellishes the shores of the Nile. The American *Felis atrox* Leidy is also, according to Dawkins and Sanford, identical with *F. leo* var. *spelæa*, so that its range extended over Europe, through Russia and north Asia, and, by way of Bering Strait, into America as far south as Mexico (loc cit., p. 163).

All the deposits in which the bones of the cave lion have been found in the countries mentioned above are either Post-Glacial or Quaternary. But Dawkins and Sanford think it would be rash to, a priori, exclude the occurrence in the Pliocene time. They also point out that Aristotle calls the lion "rare," while Herodotus, one hundred and fifty years before, could still say there were "many," and they think that it decreased during that interval. They then further observe, following Lewis,^c that Dio Chrysostomus, 80 or 100 A. D., speaks of the complete extinction of the lion, so that within four hundred years after Aristotle it disappeared from Europe.^d Lastly, they lay stress upon the lion in the folklore of the Balkan peoples because this permits the conclusion of the simultaneous occurrence of the lion with man. This, too, is based chiefly on the data brought together by G. C. Lewis in his two extremely readable essays.^e

Whatever weight may be given to the accounts or legends of the ancients or to the views of modern naturalists on the simultaneousness of man with the cave lion, there is at all events a connection between the former and present range of the lion, and since lions still roam not far from Greece its gradual retreat before man and civilization to the present limit of its range is not only not unlikely, but, on the contrary, most probable.

^aTundren und Steppen, 1890, p. 193.

^bLa chronologie géologique, Bull. Acad. R. Belgique, 3d series, vol. VIII, No. 12, 1884, p. 18 of the separate copy.

^cLoc. cit., vol. VIII, p. 83, 1859.

^dSee also Dawkins, Die Höhlen und die Ureinwohner Europas, German translation by Spengel, 1876, p. 62.

^eNotes and Queries, 2d series, vol. VIII, pp. 81-84, 1859, and vol. IX, pp. 57-59, 1860.

According to the Old Testament, the lion was common in the Lebanon region and even on the Jordan. It occurred in Palestine until the twelfth century (the time of the Crusaders).^a In Syria its existence can be traced from the earliest historical times to the present day. According to Perrot and Chipiez,^b Amenophis III (1400 B. C.) is proved to have chased the lion in northern Syria on a large scale. Only twenty years ago, according to Tristram (loc. cit.), the body of a lion was brought to Damascus. In Egypt proper, lions but rarely occurred,^c while in northern Syria they must have been quite numerous. Ancient writers also—Xenophon, Aristotle, Strabo, Pliny, and others—speak of lion hunts in Syria and in Arabia. The lions in the latter country are said to have been more powerful and numerous than in Lybia. Tristram states that in Mesopotamia the lion is at present common. Layard, in the middle of the last century, heard its roaring not far from Bagdad. In the north it occurs on the Tigris as far as Kalaat Schergat, on the Euphrates as far as Bir,^d and, lastly, in Persia,^e where the lion is especially found “in the forest slopes of the Zagros,” the chief mountain region of Persia. Abbott^f mentions the lion among the animals of Khorasmia.^g On its occurrence in northwest India, see Blandford (loc. cit.) and Dawkins.^h

Considering all this, I hold it not well to be doubted, from reasons of natural science, that in Herodotus's time lions still lived in the regions named by him, and I hold it not impossible that the ancient lion representations in Greece, such as a lion chase upon a Mycenæan

^a H. B. Tristram, *The Survey of Western Palestine*, 1884, p. 17. Comp. also his *Natural History of the Bible*, 7th ed., 1883, p. 116 sq.

^b *Geschichte der Kunst im Altertum: Aegypten*, German translation by R. Pietschmann, p. 862, 1884.

^c “The artists of the new empire were encouraged to a frequent representation of the lion above all through the renewed acquaintance with the animal itself, and one might think that this Asiatic lion possessed their imagination when they depict lions either with a very light mane or with none at all, if both varieties did not appear at Beni Hassan. At all events the lion with heavy mane is the more original type in Egyptian art . . . Only very rarely do the forms of the lion in Egyptian representations indicate the Assyrian type. The heraldic use of animals upon shields and pectorals is also of Asiatic origin, appearing in the second Theban empire in pictures which exhibit gryphons, jackals, and lions.” (Perrot and Chipiez, loc. cit.) Thus there occur upon Egyptian monuments both the Egyptian and the Asiatic types of lions (both wild and tamed), with a noticeable difference, which is worth consideration also in other parts of ancient archaeology, as, for instance, in the study of the Greeks.

^d *Nineveh*, vol. II, p. 48, 1849.

^e *Eastern Persia*, vol. II, *Zoology and Geology*, by W. T. Blandford, 1876, p. 29, and W. Geiger, *Grundriss der Iranischen Philologie*, vol. II, pt. 3, p. 382, 1897.

^f *Narrative of a journey from Heraut to Khiwa*, London, 1843, vol. II, p. 25, supplement.

^g Comp. Pictet, *Les Origines indo-europ.*, 2d ed., vol. I, p. 529, Paris, 1877.

^h *Die Höhlen*, etc., 1876, p. 312.

dagger, were made from nature, viz, at a time when the animal still occurred there in a wild state. Lewis is of a different opinion, and says:^a "The lions on the gate of Mycenæ are of great antiquity, but the occurrence of this animal in works of early art can not be considered as evidence of his presence in the country. Sculptured lions occur more than once in connection with Etruscan tombs, and there is no reason to believe that the lions ever existed in Italy * * *." But can this last objection be considered valid?^b Besides, not all non-naturalists are of this opinion, as, for instance, Perrot and Chipiez:^c "Unless we assume—and we have no ground whatever for so doing—that it was an object imported from without,^d we must admit, notwithstanding all that has been said to the contrary, that the lion in those remote times still haunted the mountains of the Peloponnesus and central Greece, and that the engravers and sculptors, when they portrayed that animal, were able to do so from nature." Thus in the discussion of the earliest historic time more or less subjective opinions come into play, and natural science likewise can consider the question as solved only when the discovery of recent lion bones under incontestable circumstances gives positive proof. Of this, however, there seems little hope. At all events it might be suggested that in future excavations all animal bones be conscientiously collected and submitted to experts for examination.

^a Loc. cit., vol. viii, p. 81.

^b Prof. P. Herrmann, of the Royal Sculpture Collection at Dresden, writes me: "The view of Lewis, which is based on the lion representations in Etruscan art, and quoted by you, is absolutely untenable. These Etruscan monuments are a thousand years younger than the Mycenæan and have, besides, their parallels in the contemporary art creations of the Greeks. No archaeologist has maintained or will maintain of either of them that the lion images appearing on them were made from direct observation of nature. They are obviously borrowed from Asia. This shows itself clearly enough in the absence of the refined and free realism which characterizes the Mycenæan representations in such a high degree." Compare also the chapter "The lion and the lotus," in William H. Goodyear's *The Grammar of the Lotus*, London, 1891, pp. 205–211, with plates xxix and xxx (add. 1904).

^c *Hist. de l'art dans l'antiquité. La Grèce primitive, l'art mycénien*, vol. 6, p. 823–826, figs. 402 and 403, 1894.

^d I can not think that the idea of introducing captive lions which may have served as models for the artists should so lightly be rejected.

DERMOID CYSTS A BASIS OF INDIAN LEGENDS

A. W. F. BANFIELD

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DERMOID CYSTS A BASIS OF INDIAN LEGENDS

A tumor specimen has led to the disclosure of the factual basis of a curious Indian legend. Strong (Jour. Mamm., 11: 1-10, 1930), writing of his investigations in Labrador, reports: "Certain non-mythical theories adhered to by the Davis Inlet Indian. . . they say that the abnormal dwarf caribou called *mah-tákw-ah-tée-hoos*, which they have occasionally seen and killed, are carried by the male caribou for six years in a skin sack attached to the belly. Then they are dropped fully developed and accompany the herd. Unlike the larger animals these dwarf caribou are said never to have botfly holes in the skin."

This legend seems to have been widely held by Indians, for Seton (Life histories of northern animals, vol. 1, pp. 182-183, 1909) wrote concerning moose: "Another curious thing in moose life was reported to me by William G. Tweddell of Woonona, Manitoba. He asked me if I had ever heard of the Peeto-mong-sons or 'Little Moose in the Big Moose.' One moose in about 500, he said, has a little medicine Moose in its skin. When this is found it is a can-

for much rejoicing among the Indians. It is carefully preserved as great medicine, and the man who found it is believed to have secured a mascot of eternal good luck in moose hunting.

"Cross examination did not shake his evidence. It was not a foetus—Tweddell was sure of that. It was in the skin, and usually in that of a bull moose. He had seen two; the more recent one was about a foot long; it had hoofs and hair but no bones."

Much earlier, Richardson (*Fauna Boreali-Americana*, Part I, pp. 250–251, 1829) described a similar abnormality in a woodland caribou. "The same gentleman mentions that the buck has a peculiar bag or cyst in the lower part of the neck about the bigness of a crow piece, and filled with fine flaxen hair neatly coiled round to the thickness of an inch. There is an opening through the skin near the head leading to the cyst but Mr. Hutchins (Hudson Bay Company manager at York Factory) does not offer a conjecture as to its uses in the economy of the animal."

Seton (*op. cit.*) correctly deduced that the abnormality was a dermoid cyst, which is rarely but regularly found in domestic animals. It may contain hair, teeth, nails or other products of the ectoderm. However, the Indian legends of "dwarf moose or caribou" might be based upon the occurrence of teratomas—abnormal repressed twins.

One can well imagine the interest in the object which accompanied the following letter in French addressed to the National Museum of Canada by a Montagnais Indian at Shefferville (Knob Lake), Quebec, and referred to this Service.

29 October, 1956.

I am sending for analysis, a "little caribou" growth which was found between the flesh and the hide. After the completion of its development this growth may reach a size of about 30 lbs. When the caribou dies, the little one remains alive (having killed the big one). When the little caribou comes out of the skin it resembles a two-year-old caribou. You may see the hair in the specimen I am sending. In the north it is very rare. I would like to study this more and hope that you will give me some details.

JEROME ST. ONGE,
Indian Reservation,
Shefferville, North Shore,
Province of Quebec.

The specimen consisted of a circular-shaped cyst about 5.8 cm. in diameter and 2.5 cm. thick at the point of attachment. The wall of the cyst was thin and transparent. The cavity contained tightly packed flaxen hair in a whorl about a central axis at the point of attachment. The specimen probably came from an eastern woodland caribou, *Rangifer caribou caribou*.

Thus a rare abnormality seems to be the physical basis for a legend widely held among Canadian Indian tribes.—A. W. F. BANFIELD, *Canadian Wildlife Service, Ottawa, Canada*
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